

approaching Baltimore, at a point six miles from the city, between it and the Relay House, Mrs. Curry, who was seated by her husband's side in the carriage, was struck on the head by a stone, weighing some four pounds, which was hurled at the occupants of the vehicle by some undiscovered ruffian; and her skull was fractured.

"At first," writes Curry, "I thought that she had been shot with a pistol; and did not learn the extent of the injury until, on arriving at the Eutaw House, Dr. R. N. Smith, the eminent surgeon, came out and informed me. She did not recover consciousness until the 9th. We had the sympathy and proffers of service from hosts of friends."

No clue to the perpetrator of this outrage, nor motive for its commission was ever discovered; but it had the effect of disarranging all of Curry's plans; and it was not until the 9th of the month, two days after the Convention had assembled, that he appeared before it, and made an address in behalf of the Greenville Theological Seminary. His recent experiences in Alabama had profoundly impressed him with the need of providing religious instruction for the newly-emancipated slaves; and we find him soon after his visit to Baltimore, and the accident to Mrs. Curry, addressing a mass-meeting of Baptists in Richmond, and urging upon his auditors the importance of the Southern people putting forth more vigorous efforts for giving the negroes a proper religious education. In the meantime he was still "preaching,"—filling, as opportunity offered or occasion demanded, the various pulpits of Drs. Fuller, Williams, and Hatcher. The astounding readiness with which, without technical preparation, he was

able to "preach" to the delight of great critical audiences in the big cities proves again the contention that the man's overmastering impulse was didactic. He *had* to preach—from some sort of rostrum.

His summer of this year was more or less uneventful. In June he was in New York City, preaching in the Madison Avenue Church, and receiving and considering certain tentative propositions, looking to his acceptance of its pastorate, as the successor of Dr. H. G. Weston, who had been called to the Presidency of Crozer Theological Seminary. Later he attended sundry association meetings; and on the 13th of July, 1868, he signified at last his formal acceptance of a professorship in Richmond College.

For a number of successive summers after the close of the War between the States, the Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs was the rendezvous of many men and women who had been conspicuous for their devotion and services to the Confederacy; and, in the simple surroundings of the place, the most refined and gracious and intelligent society of what was left of the old South, was accustomed to gather for a brief and unostentatious annual recreation. Thither Curry went in the latter part of August, and spent a week; and among his former associates, acquaintances and friends, found there Commodore Matthew F. Maury, General Robert E. Lee, General P. G. T. Beauregard, General John Echols, Governor Pickens of South Carolina, Governor Letcher of Virginia, Senator Allen T. Caperton, Mr. Alexander H. H. Stuart, and Mr. Alexander H. Stephens. With the tremendous tragedy of the War immediately behind them, it may be well imagined that these illustrious partici-

pants in its tremendous endeavors and failures, found much to recall of the past, and no less to hope and plan for in the future. One wishes that such a vivid talker and keen observer as Curry had handed down to us some transcript of the talk of this unusual company. They had been actors in a great tragic enterprise and had failed, but they were not broken soldiers of fortune or disappointed adventurers. Indeed they came nearer to being martyrs than adventurers—martyrs to idealism and to love of home and locality; or else unworldly champions of an idea which seemed to them finer than life. Millions of silent, proud people still loved and trusted them. They were beginning life over again with erect heads, and most of them, as poorly paid public servants in the fields of education or industry.

The great dining hall of the famous hotel was filled one evening when a gentleman in gray clothes entered with a friend and was proceeding modestly to a seat. Suddenly some one silently rose as he passed, and, as if by magic, the whole company rose without noisy acclaim, for they had recognized the face and figure of Lee, and spontaneously their hearts had taught them to act as loyal subjects do when the king passes by. That pure and lofty face was known to them all. Some had seen it in the glare of battle. Women and children knew it as a symbol of the highest for which they had suffered. It was such a scene as could only happen to people who had known great sorrow but had kept unsullied a standard of human virtue, and thus touchingly did homage to goodness worn so simply and yet so fair to behold in the noble presence of their great leader.

During the month of September, 1868, with his
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daughter, Susie, and several friends, he made an extensive trip through the West, going as far as Fort Hayes, where they were stopped in their further journey by the depredations and incursions of hostile Indians. The return journey to Richmond was made in time to permit Curry to begin his new duties as a Professor of Richmond College on Thursday, October 1. Into this work he entered with his accustomed energy, and the enthusiasm without which men do not accomplish the great things of life; and here for ten years he labored with the assiduity, the intelligence and the well-directed effort, which justified a later verdict from the public of noble and fruitful accomplishment. Of this experience he wrote at a subsequent day:—

I have since acted as Associate Professor of Law, and am now filling the Chair of Philosophy. My association with the College has been very pleasant. I am much attached to the students, and they apparently to me. My rule is to treat them as gentlemen, and to have them regard me not as a hard taskmaster, but as a sympathizing friend.

In the meantime the “calls” and invitations that came up to him from many places and directions to pastorships which he persistently declined, attest his continued popularity and esteem among the people of his denomination; while his professional duties did not prevent a frequent indulgence by him in the exercise of his oratorical gifts in the pulpit and upon secular occasions. He records that during this year he preached sixty sermons, delivered seventy public addresses, and wrote a chapter of “Recollections” for Mr. Samuel Boykin’s biography of Governor Howell Cobb.

During December, 1868, the final act of a notable drama, growing out of the War between the States, was witnessed by Curry. In May, 1866, an indictment had been found against Mr. Davis, the President of the Confederate States, then a prisoner at Fortress Monroe, by the grand jury of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Virginia, and Charles O'Connor had written a letter to the distinguished prisoner, proffering his professional services in his defence, which offer had been accepted. At the May term, 1867, after repeated and unavailing efforts on the part of Mr. Davis' counsel, consisting of Messrs. Charles O'Connor, the acknowledged leader of the bar in the United States, William B. Reed of Philadelphia and John Randolph Tucker of Virginia, George Shea of New York, Robert Ould and James Lyons of Virginia, to obtain a trial or bail for the prisoner, the case was called for hearing on a writ of habeas corpus before Judge Underwood. Attorney General Evarts, and District Attorney Chandler appeared for the government; and Mr. Davis was released upon a bail bond of One Hundred Thousand Dollars, with Horace Greeley of New York the first surety thereon.

On the 26th of March, 1868, a new indictment had been found against the former President of the Confederacy, charging him in a number of counts, and in the involved phraseology of the law, with various acts of treason, notable among which was that of "conspiring with Robert E. Lee, J. P. Benjamin, John C. Breckinridge, William Mahone, H. A. Wise, John Letcher, William Smith, Jubal A. Early, James Longstreet, William H. Payne, D. H. Hill, A. P. Hill, P. G. T. Beauregard, W. H. C. Whiting, Ed. Sparrow,

Samuel Cooper, Joseph E. Johnston, J. B. Gordon, C. F. Jackson, F. O. Moore, and with other persons whose names are to the grand jury unknown," "to make war against the United States," and with doing various other things, all of which things were alleged to have been done "traitorously, unlawfully, maliciously and wickedly."

On the finding of this indictment, the trial was continued from time to time until the fourth Monday in November, when it was arranged that Chief Justice Chase should be present. This date was later changed to December 3, 1868; and on that day the Chief Justice sat with Judge Underwood to hear a motion to quash the indictment. On this occasion, Messrs. O'Connor, Ould, Read and Lyons of Mr. Davis' counsel appeared; and the government was represented by the newly appointed district attorney, Mr. Beach, and by Mr. Richard H. Dana, Jr., of Boston, and Mr. H. H. Wells, the former military Governor of Virginia, when it was "District Number One." Mr. Ould opened for the defense on the motion to quash, and Messrs. Beach, Wells and Dana replied. Mr. O'Connor concluded the case for Mr. Davis on the 4th; and the Chief Justice and Judge Underwood disagreed, and the case was continued until May, 1869. On the 15th day of February, 1869, the following order was entered in the Federal Circuit Court at Richmond:—

MONDAY, February 15, 1869.

United States

vs. *Upon Indictment for Treason.*

Thomas P. Turner, William Smith, Wade Hampton, Benjamin Huger, Henry A. Wise, Samuel Cooper, G. W. C. Lee, W. H. F. Lee, Charles Mallory, William Mahone,

O. F. Baxter, Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, William E. Taylor, Fitzhugh Lee, George W. Alexander, Robert H. Booker, John DeBree, M. D. Corse, Eppa Hunton, Roger A. Pryor, D. B. Bridgford, Jubal A. Early, R. S. Ewell, William S. Winder, George Booker, Cornelius Bayles, William H. Payne, R. S. Andrews, C. J. Faulkner, and R. H. Dulaney, W. N. McVeigh, H. B. Taylor, James A. Seddon, W. B. Richards, Jr., J. C. Breckinridge and Jefferson Davis.

(Two cases.)

The District Attorney, by leave of the Court, saith that he will not prosecute further on behalf of the United States against the above named parties upon separate indictments for treason. It is, therefore, ordered by the Court that the prosecutions aforesaid be dismissed.

The motion to quash having failed in the disagreement of the Chief Justice and of Judge Underwood, the fact of the disagreement was certified to the Supreme Court of the United States, where the case was never called; and thus concluded the prosecution for treason, against Mr. Davis and his associates.

Curry makes record of the historic event and of the argument of this motion on the 4th of December, 1868:—

At the Circuit Court of the United States, Chase, Chief Justice, presiding, a motion to quash the indictment against Jefferson Davis was argued. I heard an able argument from Charles O'Connor, one of Mr. Davis' counsel. Hon. Wm. B. Reed of Philadelphia was associate counsel. I called to see him, and had a pleasant interview. He was a brother of Henry Reed, the author, and himself was a graceful and scholarly writer. Our acquaintance began by a letter he wrote to me, complimenting a speech in 1859 on the Speaker's election.

This cold and almost colorless allusion to an event which deeply moved the hearts of the Southern people, written by one of the most ardent advocates of the right of Secession and of State sovereignty, the recognition or condemnation of which doctrines at the hands of the law lay in the determination of this case, serves to illustrate the cool temper of Curry's mind and how quickly he had begun to put into practice his precept to his son: "Let us live in the present and for the future, leaving the dead past to take care of itself." Though there is nowhere in his voluminous writings to be found any recantation of the settled and fixed convictions and principles of his political philosophy, when the arbitrament of the sword had once made final disposition of secession and of the Calhoun idea, he did not continue to dwell upon his ancient and unsundered faith; but turned his face steadily to those newer and more hopeful aspects, which the later dispensation promised. In this respect it may be noted here, that he followed the illustrious example, in act and precept, of his great commander, General Lee, whose *post-bellum* career was characterized by no repining or bitterness, and by such cheerful acceptance of conditions as his courage and faith might afford.

During the year 1869, Curry continued to keep busy with his collegiate duties, his lectures and his sermons, delivering among others two lectures in Washington College, at Lexington, Virginia, on "Language and Character," before cultured and appreciative audiences that included in their number the great president of the institution, General Robert E. Lee.

During this session the Trustees of Richmond

College determined to abandon the governmental system of the college, which included a President, in favor of the more democratic scheme of making the professors of the various schools under the title of chairmen administrative heads of the college. In this change they pursued the plan of government that had been devised by Mr. Jefferson for the University of Virginia, where it had been followed with success since the foundation of that institution. Of the two great features of the higher education in collegiate and university administration and instruction, both of which Jefferson emphasized in his foundation of his University, that of the elective system of studies has since his time steadily grown and prevailed, in more or less modified form, until it has become a conspicuous and accustomed feature of university and college life in America; while the other, namely, of choosing a Chairman of the Faculty from the professors in rotation as the temporary head of the institution, has been tried in various southern institutions, as Curry records its trial in 1869 at Richmond College, only to be ultimately abandoned, as it was abandoned there, and has since been abandoned at the University of Virginia itself, as inadequate and insufficient under existing conditions. It is to be observed, however, that Curry makes no comment upon its effectiveness or lack of it, as it came under his observation at that time.

At this time the little brown books are full of notes of a more or less domestic and personal nature, which record the graduation of his daughter at the Richmond Female College in the schools of English, French and Moral Science; the inception of Mrs.

Curry's work as a teacher of the infant class in the Sunday School of the First Baptist Church, of which she made a great success, raising this class in numbers from thirty, when she first took charge of it, to two hundred and twenty-five, when she gave it up ten years later, on account of ill-health; and of various other incidents and occurrences of temporary personal interest.

The invitations to pastorates still continued to be made and declined.

On his return from St. Louis, in obedience to such a call, he heard Beecher preach in the Brooklyn Tabernacle; and this year, too, the American Baptist Publication Society published his tract, "Protestantism: How far a Failure"—a discussion showing the development of his mind in the direction of technical theological investigation.

But perhaps the most notable event of the year 1869, in its bearing upon his later career, was his meeting with Mr. George Peabody. The Peabody Fund had, at that time, just been established; and Dr. Barnas Sears, an able and scholarly citizen of Massachusetts, had been made its Agent, and had come south, and taken up his residence at Staunton, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

"In 1869," writes Curry of this episode, "at the White Sulphur Springs, I had the honor of being introduced by Dr. Sears to Mr. Peabody. This was the first and only time I ever saw him. The interview was pleasant, and I was agreeably impressed by his benevolent countenance, the dignity and ease with which he received visitors, and his earnest, patriotic desire that the impoverished South should be benefitted by his benefaction."

Curry has left in his "History of the Peabody

Education Fund " a more extended account of both Mr. Peabody and Dr. Sears, the latter of whom he visited some years afterwards at his home in Staunton.

The year 1870 brought to him many occasions for wide and varied service in the causes of education and religion. He attended a National Baptist Convention in Brooklyn, in April of that year, which was held under the auspices of the Brooklyn Social Union,—in many respects a remarkable assemblage, which gave a great impulse to the educational movement of the time. Curry delivered an address before the Convention on the "Condition and Prospects of Education in the South," as affecting both races, with especial reference to the duties of Baptists in relation thereto.

In June, 1870, his almost abnormal activity took form in a Report to the Board of Foreign Missions of his Church, in which he recommended the establishment of a mission in Europe. "From this," he modestly writes in 1877, "came the present successful Italian Mission."

Recurring to his diaries, we note the genesis and beginning of the Richmond College Law School, in these simple entries:—

December 10, 1868.—Trustees of Richmond College determined to establish a Law School.

October 11, 1870.—Delivered my first lecture to Law Class on Constitutional Law.

And about 1877:—

In October, 1870, began the Law School of Richmond College, with Mr. William Green, Judge Halyburton and myself as Professors, I taking the chair of Constitutional and International Law.

It was a remarkable faculty with which the young law school opened its doors. Curry, himself, was a man of unusual distinction, wide experience, and strong ability; Judge Halyburton had occupied conspicuous position in the public eye in ante-bellum years, and in the era of the Confederacy; and Mr. William Green was, by the testimony of his brethren of the bar, one of the most learned lawyers then living in America. But Halyburton and Green were both comparatively aged men, with "eyes grown old with gazing on the pilot-stars"; and neither continued long in their new chairs. So that the burden of the new law school fell upon Curry,—a burden which he bore with his characteristic energy and ability for several years.

On October 12, of this year (1870), General Robert E. Lee died at Lexington; and the next month an historic meeting of Confederate soldiers was held in Richmond to inaugurate a movement for building a monument to the great leader of the Southern armies. This meeting convened in the Second Presbyterian Church; and, amid much enthusiasm, speeches were made by ex-President Davis, Generals Gordon, Preston, and Henry A. Wise; and Colonels Marshall, Johnson, Withers, and others. The movement resulted in the noble equestrian monument of Lee that is now one of the chief ornaments of Monument Avenue in the former Confederate Capital.

At this time, Dr. Barnas Sears, the General Agent of the Peabody Fund, was present in Richmond; and on November 2 he was Curry's guest. The same day a meeting was held in the Capitol with the object of advancing the cause of the Common School System, provided by the new Constitution

of the State, and already inaugurated by Virginians under the restored government of the Commonwealth. The deliberations of this conference were participated in by Governor Gilbert C. Walker, Dr. Sears, W. W. Walker of Westmoreland, and Curry, all of whom delivered addresses.

In December, 1870, the joint committee of the two houses of the Virginia Legislature, then in session, to which had been referred the question of the disposal of the Government Land Script, held public sessions in the Capitol; and various representatives of the colleges and higher educational institutions presented the claims of their respective institutions to the endowment. Curry in two able and earnest speeches before this Committee urged the claims of Richmond College; but, as the issue developed, without success.

In July, 1871, the Trustees of Richmond College combined the schools of English and Moral Science, and elected Curry to the chair. He accepted the appointment, resigning the professorship of Law in order to give his complete official time to this work, which was more congenial to his tastes than that of a law teacher. Again his diary is a dry record of the addresses that he delivered in 1871, and of the pastorates and professorships that he declined. He caps the climax of this distinguished, if uninteresting period, by the recital of his declination of three College presidencies within the twelve months, namely, of Georgetown College, Kentucky, of Mercer University, Georgia, and of the University of Alabama; and notes during the same year his refusal of a professorship in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Many more were to follow from all parts

of the country, among them that of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, whose record of educational distinction might well have proved an allurements to his ambition.

The criterion for the choice of a professor in those days was not exact scholarship and published research, but personality, impressive human qualities and teaching ability. This shifting about from law to English and from philosophy to theology strikes our modern notions queerly, but poverty and the emphasis on teaching ability made it possible. Curry could teach anything attractively, and his energy kept his attainments always in advance of his pupils.

The year 1872 was, in his own words, "active and memorable"; but more from his personal point of view, than from that of the general reader; for its record embraces solely the details of energetic work done by him in behalf of his church and of the educational institution with which he was officially connected. Such civic, religious and educational honors continued to be showered upon him as are usually conferred upon few men; and if his notation of them is exact almost to monotonousness, it is none the less free from any expression which indicates that they brought with them elation or undue self-appreciation.

It was at a great meeting of the association of his church that a Memorial Campaign was organized that aroused much of his enthusiasm, and to whose work he contributed no little of his energies and efforts. It was determined to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the body; "and," he states, "appropriately to testify our gratitude, it was resolved

unanimously by the Association to raise Three Hundred Thousand Dollars for the endowment of Richmond College. Resolutions were adopted looking to a grand meeting at Richmond the ensuing year. A Memorial Committee, of which I was a member, was appointed to carry out the project of the Memorial Fund; and Dr. J. L. Burrows was chosen as the Financial Secretary."

"Thus began," he continues, "our grand Memorial Campaign, when the Baptist Churches were visited, addressed and thoroughly aroused. Great excitement was produced. Many Baptist preachers and laymen became voluntary agents to help on the good work. We combined with the Semi-Centennial celebration a remembrance of what the Baptists of Virginia had done for the great work of Religious Liberty in the United States. This involved necessarily a recital of the legislation of the Colony and a discussion of the principle of an Establishment. Collaterally, Presbyterians and Methodists were brought into the discussion; but the Episcopalians were especially sore at the production of their unenviable record. Carefully I abstained from all attacks upon, or criticism of the Church, and confined myself to a discussion of the Establishment."

In 1873 the Baptist Memorial Campaign was actively and energetically conducted; and to it he gave effective and enthusiastic assistance. During the latter days of May and the earlier days of June of that year the Semi-centennial meeting, which the raising of the Memorial Fund was designed to commemorate, was held in Richmond. Delegates were present from many States of the Union in the North, the South and the West. Curry writes of it that it was the largest religious convention that ever assem-

bled in Virginia; and certainly it was conspicuous among religious gatherings of a similar character for the enthusiasm of its participants. The Association met in the Second Baptist Church, and he was re-elected its President. The building itself was inadequate to hold the great numbers in attendance; and the largest audiences were accommodated under a huge tent which was erected upon the Richmond College grounds. A number of the Church's most distinguished leaders and divines were present, among whom were Dr. J. A. Broadus, conspicuous as a great pulpit orator of his generation, and for his unusual gift of eloquence; Dr. J. B. Jeter, a former President of the College, and noted as an able preacher and strong controversialist, and who was widely known as the editor of the *Religious Herald*, and as the author of a number of published works; Dr. Sears, the General Agent of the Peabody Fund, and one of the most eminent scholars; and Dr. S. S. Cutting, the first Secretary of the American Baptist Educational Commission, and himself a writer and theologian of national distinction. On the second day of the session Curry delivered to a large and deeply interested audience an address on the subject of "The Struggles and Triumphs of Virginia Baptists," a notable historical contribution to the story of the struggle for Religious Freedom in Virginia, which was published by the American Baptist Publication Society, and reached a wide circulation.

The Montgomery White Sulphur Springs at this period vied with the old Greenbrier White in the distinction and eminence of its guests and habitués; and in the late summer of 1873 Curry attended a meeting there of the members of the Southern His-

torical Society, which was presided over by "Honest John" Letcher, the War Governor of the Commonwealth, and addressed by General Jubal A. Early. The object of the Society, which has down to the present time continued to maintain a successful and highly important existence, was "to collect and preserve materials for an authentic history" of the South; and among others who were present at this meeting, and interested with Curry and their other associates in the work of the Society, were Generals Beauregard, Wilcox, Fitzhugh Lee, Dabney H. Maury and Humes, and Commander Raphael Semmes, of the Confederate ship, the "Alabama." Curry records a later meeting of the Society in October of the same year, that was held in Richmond, the participants in which were scarcely less famous. Among them he mentions General Early, who presided clad in a suit of Confederate gray, such as he wore to the day of his death; Dr. Hoge, the eminent and eloquent Presbyterian divine, whose oration at the unveiling of the statue of "Stonewall" Jackson, presented by English gentlemen to the State of Virginia, suggested, in its lofty dignity, the eloquence of Bossuet; General Wade Hampton, later Governor of South Carolina, and Senator from that State, and Major Robert Stiles, whose subsequently published "Four Years with Marse Robert" ranks with the best stories of the great tragedy of the War between the States. It is pleasant and inspiring to behold these men, unbroken in spirit, taking counsel together how they might preserve and increase the spiritual and intellectual integrity of a society whose outlook then seemed almost hopeless.

Nothing, however, appears to have served in any

degree to deflect him from the two things with which his mind and heart during this period were overflowing. His first and foremost thought and effort alike were in behalf of the causes of religion and of education; and he continued, whenever his professional duties permitted, the self-imposed work of speaking and preaching in many places. Of all of these speeches and sermons he makes systematic record; and among the memoranda of this year occurs the following quaint entry of an experience in Southwest Virginia:—

Made a Sunday School talk and preached at a Lutheran Church in the country. Collection taken up for Professor of Theology at Roanoke College, sixty cents. Hard crowd.

Sometime in October of this year he attended the World's Evangelical Alliance in New York City, where he met with severe criticism on account of the frankness of his arguments against the alliance of Church and State in England. He attacked the establishment of the Church in that country with an earnestness and vigor that were more characteristic than discreet, in view of the presence in which he spoke; and he was called to order amid demonstrations of considerable feeling and excitement. He has left the following account of this episode among his notes:—

Delegates from Europe, Asia and America were present. I delivered an address, prepared by request of Dr. Schaff and others on the "Relations of Church and State." An officious extension of time by one Dr. Crookes, a Methodist minister, produced an intense excitement. The Assembly *en masse* cheered and hur-

rahd and demanded that I should proceed; but I declined and retired, being followed by three-fourths of the audience. Besides its appearance in the proceedings of the Alliance, my address was widely published in Europe and America, and the Liberation Society of England issued it as a tract to help them in their work.

Curry's account of the incident does not seem, however, to be exact in the light of the reports of the current newspaper-press of the time. These show that he was called "to order" rather than "to time"; and that Dr. Crookes, who was presiding, interrupted him, not so much because his half-hour was up as because his speech was regarded as unpleasant by some of the English churchmen who were present.

Curry's status as a citizen of Virginia had by this time become so firmly established, and the impression which his ability and devotion had made upon the people of the State was so strong that in January, 1874, members of the Legislature then in session at Richmond approached him with the suggestion that he should become a candidate for the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. At this time Dr. William H. Ruffner, who had drafted the bill establishing the public school system under the new Constitution of Virginia, and had been elected the first Superintendent, was discharging with great zeal and ability the duties of the office; and either in recognition of Ruffner's services in this position, or because he did not care to adventure the contest, or for some other reason that is not disclosed, Curry declined the invitation. At the same session of the Legislature, when that body was anxiously looking around for a fit and proper person to represent Virginia in the Federal Senate,—a search which finally

resulted in the selection of Col. Robert E. Withers,—Curry's name, with those of a number of other native or adopted Virginians, was suggested for the position. That his just self-esteem was touched by the suggestion is evidenced by the note that he makes of it; but it is very questionable if he was ever seriously considered by any large number of the members.

"Visited the Legislature," he writes under date of January 10, 1874, in his diary, "in session for half an hour. Several members propose to use my name for United States Senate, as caucus of Conservative members have not been able to agree on a candidate."

In January, 1875, he began preaching at the First Baptist Church, according to an agreement which he had made in the preceding November to supply the pulpit for two months following the resignation of Dr. J. L. Burrows. This pastorate of two months was prolonged to six; and in the meantime he declined a call for a year. His work in this temporary pastorate was broadened by degrees in various directions, the most distinctive of which was a course of lectures to the church on the principles of the Baptists, which were dealt with, as he states, "not controversially, but for information."

Curry had now reached the meridian of life—fifty years of age. He had come up to Virginia from the lower South at forty-three, in obedience to an impulse always dominant in him, seeking an opportunity to array himself with the forces of progress and growth. Wealth and dignity of living had fallen to his lot, emancipating him from sordid anx-

ieties. Love and admiration and sympathy, conditions absolutely necessary to the manifestation of his highest powers, stimulated and pricked him on to effort and helpfulness. His health was robust and his ambitions keen. He had a genius for popularity, a nature for public service. The abiding value of the idea of community effort, of collectivism in a democracy, came to him instinctively, as they did to Jefferson, despite the individualistic theories of government held by both. He was such a figure of humanitarian enthusiasm as New England had produced too luxuriantly, almost rankly, but which the South, since Jefferson's time, had produced rarely. He beheld society as an organism trying to grow under law. His passion was to aid in finding the law and in welcoming and leading the growth. He beheld Southern society, with unconquerable courage, seeking new standards and new ways of life, new economic conditions, amid a devastation unequalled in modern times. Proud, sensitive democracies must be pleaded with and shown how to do things needful to their growth, with infinite tact and patience. This was Curry's function. He was a pleader and a teacher and an ambassador to a proud, capable, stricken, but indomitable democracy. The bare record as set forth in this chapter seems scrappy and fragmentary. We see an intensely busy man teaching youth anything, from law to literature, preaching everywhere from the Pacific to the Atlantic, foremost in all great educational or religious organizations, writing for the press, rushing hither and thither and very happy and jubilant, not only over the tasks at hand but over the calls that everywhere came to him to come and help everybody.

Looked at closely, however, these virile seven years of Curry's in the Old Dominion are not desultory years. They form a complete unit and constitute a perfect preparation for the supreme work which society needed to exact of him. The significance of moral character, the training of all the people, the spread of social sympathy—this trinity of public virtues was the creed this tireless public preacher was crying out to the South and to the Nation from the vantage ground of the great Commonwealth which had given the Nation birth, and had so suffered for duty's sake as to evoke the tenderness and regard of generous minds in all lands.

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICS AND PRINCIPLES

THE Presidential election, the result of which was finally determined by the extra-constitutional Electoral Commission, took place in 1876; and Curry, in common with the mass of the American people, experienced a deep interest in its conduct and results. His journal of the period makes usually but scant record of contemporaneous politics. The eager politician of the 'fifties, absorbed in religious and educational work, seemed to have forgotten the existence of the machinery of government, but this startling event, whose issue threatened at one time grave and portentous results, is frequently mentioned by him. He notes his exercise of the franchise on election day, as follows:—

Tuesday, Nov. 7, 1876.—Voted before breakfast for Tilden and Hendricks, and for amendments to the (State) Constitution.

The following day shows this entry:—

Wednesday, 8.—News from the election of yesterday assures the success of Tilden & Hendricks. Result rather unexpected. People gathered in the streets in front of the *Dispatch* office, reading and hearing telegrams from various States and shouting vociferously. We feel as if the days of Federal tyranny were numbered. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

His patriotic exultation was short-lived. On Thursday, the 9th, he writes:—

Negroes very noisy and jubilant over Hayes' election, which is not a "fixed fact."

Other memoranda bearing upon the controverted result appear from time to time.

Nov. 20.—Still much uneasiness about the Presidential election. Universal distrust of President Grant and his party. Fraud or usurpation not considered beyond their purpose or capability. I am tired of this turmoil and distrust. I want a country I can love.

Dec. 2.—The country is much excited about the Presidential election. In South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana serious charges of fraud and intimidation on both sides. Gen. Grant has sent troops to each of the States. The votes of those States, if counted for Hayes, elect him. One electoral vote will elect Tilden. Business seriously affected by the possibility of an outbreak.

Dec. 6, 1876.—The Legislature of Virginia and the Electoral College meet in Richmond to-day. Heard that Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina, the doubtful States, had been so manipulated as to secure their votes for Hayes and Wheeler.

The early part of 1877 found the issue still undetermined; and in order to reach a settlement the contending parties agreed upon the creation and organizing of the famous Electoral Commission, which, after listening to the arguments of counsel and gravely considering many momentous questions of law and fact, decided the contest at last according to the law of human nature. The Republicans upon the Commission were in a numerical majority of one; and the Electoral Commission, by a majority of one,

declared the Republican nominees elected. Curry, keeping tally in his journal of the situation, writes, under date of February 10, 1877: "News this morning rather gloomy. Seems as if the Commission by a party vote will decide in favor of Hayes for President."

Later in the month he and his son, Manly, went to Washington; and the diary, under the date of February 24, contains the following:—

After going to the President's house, we went to the Capitol and spent most of the day in the House of Representatives, to the floor of which both of us were admitted.

We witnessed the assembling of the two Houses twice to count the electoral votes. Oregon, having passed the Commission, was after debate passed on. Pennsylvania was objected to.

Much dissatisfaction with the Commission. Democrats complain of having been deceived. Some bitterness on the part of Northwestern Democrats towards Eastern. Southern Democrats opposed to mere dilatory and factious opposition.

Not impressed by the ability of the House. Very few of the members with whom I served.

He again visited Washington on March 2.

Reached Washington at 1:30 and stopped at Willard's Hotel. Went in the afternoon and at night to the Capitol. The Congress having this morning, at 5 A. M., after a night's session, elected Hayes President, the business was of a routine character. I met in the Senate and House a number of old associates. The House did not impress me favorably. Many of the members of very ordinary ability. At night I remained until 10 o'clock. . . . The feeling of Democrats quite bitter, regarding themselves as having been cheated out of the Presidency.

Curry's natural interest in the momentous question before Congress and the Commission would of itself have afforded sufficient reason for his visits to Washington at this time; but there was also a question of a more personal character that was doubtless an impelling motive for his presence in the national capital. His pardon for bearing arms against the Government in the War between the States had been granted in October, 1865, by President Johnson; but during the twelve years following he still rested under political disabilities. In 1872 a general amnesty bill had been passed by the Congress removing the political disabilities imposed by the new amendments to the Constitution; but from its provisions were excepted about seven hundred and fifty persons, who had held the highest positions under the United States government. He wanted, as he had written, "a government that he could love"; his ardent temperament and instinctive patriotism demanded the exercise of loyalty, and it was not unnatural, though painful, for him to entertain some lack of complete affection for the government under which he was still inhibited from the right to hold office. The bill to remove his disabilities was passed by the Senate on February 27, 1877; and on March 2 the formalities were completed by which he was restored to full citizenship. Upon the following day he received an extraordinary tribute to his high character, his reputation for great ability, and his conceded patriotism.

"I called at the Capitol," he wrote, many years later, "and had a pleasant interview with Senator Sherman, who had, unsought, interposed in favor of the removal of my political disabilities, and for whose integrity, patriotism, and ability I had great respect and admiration. When

leaving, he asked me if I were not going to see the President. I replied that as a matter of respect and friendship I should be glad of the privilege, but I had no business with him, and besides must leave the city in a few hours. To this he answered, 'You ought to go. He likes you very much. I have often heard him speak well of you.' 'If I were to try to see him, I could not, as hundreds of people must be pressing for interviews.' 'I will arrange that. He is at my house. Take this card.' Writing something on the card, which contained his name and street address, he handed it to me, and I left. Arriving at the house, I sent in my card and Mr. Sherman's, and was requested to wait a few minutes until a deputation from Ohio retired. In a few minutes I had a cordial welcome. After the usual inquiries, he expressed earnestly his desire and purpose so to conduct his administration as to bring the estranged sections into harmony and fraternity. Then to my surprise and gratification he declared his willingness to put into his cabinet some Southern men, or a Southern man, who had voted for Mr. Tilden, provided the person would give his administration an impartial support. A place in the Cabinet was tendered to me, but declined with proper and sincere expressions of thankfulness for the confidence reposed. He then said he was willing to appoint Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, and wished my opinion as to his acceptance on the conditions mentioned. As to his acceptance I had no knowledge, but the acceptance would imply necessarily loyalty to his Chief. Having so confided in me, I ventured to say that the appointment would defeat the patriotic purpose of pacification he so warmly expressed. Gen. Johnston was so identified with the Confederacy, his promotion to a high place would awaken bitterest opposition in the North, and its strength would be such as greatly to cripple, if not defeat, his policy. After asking me about Gov. Hubbard of Texas and Judge Key of Tennessee, afterwards made Postmaster General, he expressed a desire to make the Federal appointments in

the South acceptable to that section. I felt it my duty to express strongly my conviction: 'The South will not object to have the offices filled by Northern men, if they are honest and true, and go South, not to fleece the people, but to identify themselves with the country and its interests.' 'It would be better,' he responded, 'not to float the office-holders, but to select them from the residents.' 'No, no,' I interposed, 'you cannot find in the South a sufficient number of capable and honest white Republicans to fill the offices at your disposal.' This was naturally received with some incredulity; but I reasserted what I felt to be demonstrable truth, and I knew that putting 'scalawags,' as they were called, in responsible places meant the defeat of his noble purpose, and the serious injury of the South.

"This conversation occurred a quarter of a century ago, and thanks to President Hayes and the better understanding between the sections, and the wiser action of the governments, my strong expressions would now require large modifications."

Curry's diary for this year contains a number of interesting, if desultory, entries. Among them are the following:—

March 7.—Took supper with Dr. Coleman. Moses Ezekiel, the sculptor, was the guest,—a native of Richmond, a Jew. He made for the Jews a statue of Religious Liberty, which was unveiled during the Centennial. In Mr. Ezekiel's studio in Rome we saw the huge block on the first or second day after the workmen began upon it.

Since its author penned the foregoing paragraph, the guest of Dr. Coleman's whom he was invited to meet has achieved a larger fame that extends over two continents, and is illustrated in America not only by his statue of Religious Liberty, but by many

other noble works of art, that have sprung from his chisel in his workshop at the Eternal City in the old Baths of Diocletian. Ezekiel, now a chevalier by the grace of the King of Italy, was a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute in the later years of the War between the States, and took part with the cadet battalion in their heroic charge at New Market in 1861,—an episode that he has commemorated in his bronze statue of “Virginia lamenting her Dead,” on the grounds of the Institute at Lexington. His Jefferson, donated by the sculptor himself, adorns the north front of the Rotunda plaza at the University of Virginia.

Under the same date the diarist writes:—

The Secretary of the Baptist Publication Society notifies me to-day that for a tract of mine on The Distinctive Principles of the Baptists, the premium of Fifty Dollars offered for the best on that subject was awarded.

He was at his father's old home in Talladega County a few days later; and wrote of it in his journal:—

March 13.—Stopped at my father's place, where I spent my boyhood years. Much dilapidated. Looked at the graves in the garden. A bad custom to bury the dead on farms in the country, as they change owners so frequently. When my father removed to this place in May, 1838, it was very beautiful. The soil was fertile, the water-courses clear, game was abundant, and there were some unremoved Indians.

Of the town of Talladega, under the same date, he wrote:—

Returned to town. Spent some time in the Court House, where I practised law and made many political

speeches. People are poor and depressed. Radical misrule has been impoverishing.

March 31.—Letter from Dr. Hoge, in behalf of the Board of Directors, offering me the Presidency of the Virginia Bible Society. Declined.

April 28.—Reached Washington at 2 A. M. St. James Hotel. Called on Mr. A. H. Stephens; found him abed and cheerful. Spoke highly of Mr. Hayes.

At Willard's Hotel had a long talk with Senators Gordon and Lamar, Gov. Colquitt of Georgia, and W. H. Trescott of South Carolina, on the political outlook.

Called on Mr. Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. Lamar and I called on the President and had a pleasant interview. The President seems determined to unite North and South as one people. He is very sensible, good mannered and patriotic.

During the summer he visited Dr. Sears, in Staunton, on his return from the Warm Springs:—

July 31, 1877.—At 12:30 P. M. stage for Millboro. View from mountain magnificent. Supper at Millboro. Car for Staunton. Arrived at midnight. Found Dr. Sears' son waiting to conduct me to his father's house on the hill overlooking the town. Place much improved. The oaks encouraged; other trees and flowers along the gravelled walks. Quite a variety of fruit trees. House well arranged, economizing space, and neatly furnished.

August 1.—Coming from chamber to parlor Dr. Sears gave me a cordial greeting. Until 12 in the house and under the trees, we talked of Education at the South and the Peabody work. Dr. Sears said he was in Boston to lecture before the Social Science Association. Geo. B. Emerson invited him to a club of Bostonians. Mr. R. C. Winthrop, who was present, invited him to present in writing his views as to the proper expenditure of the Peabody Grant, as the Trustees were to hold their first meeting in a few days in New York. This he did in a letter of eight

pages. When the Trustees met, his suggestions were adopted, and he was elected Secretary to carry them out. Thus arose his connection with the Peabody Fund.

While Horace Mann was Secretary of the Board of Education in Massachusetts, and during Dr. Sears' first two years in that office, their salary of \$1,500 each was paid by a Mr. Dwight.

In the autumn of the year Richmond was visited by a distinguished party of guests, to whom was given a cordial and hospitable reception, in which Curry bore a prominent part. His account of this event appears in his diary.

October 30.—Accompanied a deputation of the City Council and a committee of the Agricultural Society, on special invitation to meet the President of the United States. At Quantico met him, his wife and his two sons, Secretary Sherman and wife, Secretary Evarts, Secretary Thompson, Attorney General Devens, General J. T. Morgan and others. *En route* great curiosity to see Mr. Hayes. At Fredericksburg, a reception. As we came within the limits of the City of Richmond great crowds, all the military, fire companies, etc., turned out to welcome the visitors. At a stand, near Monroe Park, the President and Cabinet spoke to many thousands. I was called for. The President introduced me as his old college mate; and I asked for three cheers, which were given and repeated. *En route* to the hotel the streets were lined with enthusiastic people and flags. The President received at the Exchange Hotel at night. General Morgan our guest.

October 31.—Called at 10 on the Presidential party. Soon started to the Fair. Governor Kemper on the grounds, welcomed the President to the State. All the members of the Cabinet, and General Morgan and Dr. Loring, member of Congress from Massachusetts, spoke. Mrs. Hayes was introduced to the multitude, who cheered vociferously.

The Governor gave the President and party a reception and then a collation.

November 1.—At 10 A. M., the President and Mrs. Hayes, Mr. Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury, and Mrs. Sherman, Mr. Evarts, Secretary of State, R. W. Thompson, Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Devens, Attorney General, Governor Kemper, Generals Joseph E. Johnston, W. H. F. Lee and Wickham, Judge Meredith, Hon. J. T. Morgan, Senator from Alabama, Mr. James Thomas and Miss Kate C. Thomas breakfasted with us. Room handsomely decorated with flowers.

Went to Fair Grounds. President and members of Cabinet spoke. The President reviewed the First Virginia Regiment, and some other companies.

Dined at Col. Hobson's with Generals Morgan, Maury and S. G. Jones and Colonel Archer Anderson.

In the latter part of December, 1877, Curry spent several days in New York City, where he met President Hayes again. He preached at Hanson Place, Brooklyn, and attended various gatherings of more or less importance. Under date of December 21, his first day in the metropolis, he makes the following entry in his journal:—

In the afternoon, at the Union Theological Seminary, I heard an informal lecture of Rev. Joseph Cook before the students and others on the Advantage of Philosophical Studies in a course of Theological training. Present, Doctors Adams, Hitchcock, Shedd, Schaff, Hall, Taylor, Ralph Wells, and others.

At night heard him again in the hall of the Young Men's Christian Association on Ultimate America. The poet, William Cullen Bryant, presided.

During 1877 Curry's previous experience of receiving calls to many pulpits in various directions,

and elections to professorships and presidencies of educational institutions, was repeated. He was offered the Presidency of the East Tennessee University, and, provisionally, that of Richmond College; and he declined calls from churches in St. Louis and Baltimore; and he received invitations to make addresses and deliver lectures almost without number. On February 23, 1877, he makes the following entry in his journal, illustrative of the many demands upon his time and energies:—

Invitations to lecture in Norfolk, Portsmouth and Petersburg.

People seem to think that I am a public servant, with nothing to do but respond to their calls.

With all his enthusiasms and aroused interests, which responded whenever possible to such demands, their number outweighed his strength and time; and it is scarcely a matter of wonder that occasionally his patience became strained. Many other solicitations to render all sorts of services, and do all kinds of things, were added to the burden of these invitations. On November 15th he writes in his diary an amusing list of what a day may bring forth in the life of such a man:—

As illustration of requests made of me to-day, I have been asked,

1. For photograph.
2. To read preliminary chapters of a novel, write notice, get a publisher.
3. Obtain employment as associate or corresponding editor.
4. Find grave of a dead soldier, and cost of removal to Alabama.
5. Give opinion on feet-washing, as a religious rite.

6. Give opinion on rightfulness of firing tobacco on Sunday.

7. On suits by administrator against a brother-member of a church.

8. Secure appointment as superintendent of schools in a county.

9. Tell what is meant in 24 Matt. 30 by "Sign of the Son of Man in heaven."

10. Tell whether meteoric shower in 1833 had been predicted by scientists.

This in addition to regular college duties and faculty meetings.

In 1878 the question of the payment of the public debt of the Commonwealth, which had been contracted prior to the War between the States, and before the separation of the State of West Virginia, largely for the purpose of public improvements in what is now both States, came to the front as a matter for political disposition. A movement was inaugurated, under the leadership of General William Mahone, for a readjustment of the debt on a basis which should compel the contribution by West Virginia of its proportionate part. A wide difference of opinion sprung up in the older State as to its obligation and ability to pay the whole debt, and resulted in the disorganization of the dominant democratic party, and the birth of a new party known as "Readjuster." For several years the question was the subject of bitter political contest on the hustings and at the ballot-box, with the State and Federal Courts taking turns at attempting its legal decision. The Mahone party for a time were successful; and the democracy was dislodged from power. Colonel William E. Cameron, the Readjuster candidate for Governor, was elected to that office over Major John W.

Daniel; and Mahone and Riddleberger were chosen by the Readjuster legislature, the United States Senators.

Curry stood with the Debt-payers. He believed that as Virginia had contracted the debt, and had got value for the bonds, which had been expended for beneficent public uses, both a legal and a moral obligation existed for their payment in full, in spite of the State's great poverty and of the further fact that the debt was owned almost altogether abroad. He therefore favored, as against the "forcible readjustment" advocated by Mahone's followers, such a settlement with the creditors as should be satisfactory to them and should preserve the Commonwealth's ancient and untarnished financial honor. In January, 1878, he received a request in writing, signed by many of the most eminent "debt-paying" democrats of Richmond, including Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, Bishop Doggett, Drs. Jeter and Hoge, and Judge Meredith, to address the people on the momentous subject of the State debt. In response to the invitation, a week after its reception he spoke, with a discernment that penetrated at once the core of the issue, and with his characteristic political courage, upon the subject of "Laws and Morals" as bearing upon the question at stake. His address was delivered in Mozart Hall, a meeting-place in Richmond whose name became famous during the great political struggle by reason of its association with various gatherings of the two discordant and excited parties. A large audience greeted with tremendous applause his speech of an hour and a quarter, in which he advocated his side of the question with unusual power. He records with pardonable pride the fact that no

address which he ever delivered received more approbation and commendation than did this one; and his spirit so warmed to the contest, that it was not long before he was in the thick of it, debating the subject with speakers on the other side, or delivering addresses in very many sections of the State. Success, pronounced though temporary, perched upon the banners of his adversaries; and it was only after a long period of political acrimony and bad feeling, and a bitter struggle through all the courts, that the matter was brought to a final conclusion as a political issue.

But politics, as has been said, in spite of his long experience in the political forum, had now come to be of secondary consideration with him. Without any recantation of his old beliefs, but with a steady adherence to those which the issue of war left to him intact and permissible,—and all the while with a patriotic acceptance of later conditions,—he had long since set his face to a hopeful sunrise, and was filled with a spirit of determination to do his best for the people among whom he dwelt. Under date of November 28, 1878, he writes in his diary:—

I attended Thanksgiving meeting at the Second Church, and spoke. The South has never observed these days, from a prejudice against their supposed New England origin. I mentioned as cause for thanks:

1. Good crops.
2. Arrest of yellow-fever scourge and the Northern aid.
3. Abolition of slavery.
4. Divorcement of government from religion.
5. Constitutional Republic.
6. Peace, and freedom from entangling alliances; and spoke of the future with an honest, intelligent and Christian people.

Still holding, as so many of his Southern compatriots had held, to the constitutional interpretation of government,—the righteousness of State rights, and the unrighteousness of centralization in the Federal organization,—the one-time ardent secessionist recognized secession as a thing of the past, the earlier advocate of slavery rejoiced that it had passed away, and the prophet of the future conceived that the wise preoccupation of the South should be in education and industry rather than in politics.

Some days later he writes:—

Met Drs. Cutting and Lathrop in conference in reference to holding Institutes for training and instruction of colored Ministers. Very cordial acquiescence.

No record appears among his journals and papers of the incidents and happenings of the year 1879; but in that year he was still busy with his teaching and preaching, while he wrought into the fabric of his political campaigning the morality of maintaining public obligations.

In 1880 the journals reappear; and an entry in March of that year contains the notation of an offer from President Hayes of an appointment on the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy at West Point; but the offer appears to have been declined, as was a similar one to the Board of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, emanating from the same source.

After another visit abroad, he returned to Virginia; and in the Presidential election of that autumn voted for General Winfield Scott Hancock, the democratic candidate for President.

CHAPTER XV

PEABODY AND HIS TRUST

IN 1866 George Peabody, a wealthy merchant of England, who was by birth a native of Massachusetts, of old New England stock, had visited the United States, and had made a gift of \$2,100,000, which he increased to \$3,500,000 in 1869, for the promotion of education in the South. The first General Agent chosen by the corporation of the Peabody Fund to administer its trust, as has been stated in previous pages, was Dr. Barnas Sears. Dr. Sears died in July, 1880; and in February, 1881, Curry was elected his successor in the General Agency.

“Thursday, February 3.—Telegram from Hon. R. C. Winthrop,” he writes in his journal, “and letter of President Hayes, announcing my unanimous election as Agent of the Peabody Fund.”

Mr. Winthrop and Curry had already been in correspondence with each other on this subject; and under date of November 3, 1880, a letter had come from the former at Brookline, Massachusetts, to the latter at Richmond:—

MY DEAR SIR:—Your favor of Sept. 30th reached me just as I was leaving home to attend our Triennial Church Convention at New York. I only returned home at the

end of last week; and I am unwilling to leave it longer unacknowledged.

I thank you for your kind personal expressions, and for your offer of a welcome to Richmond. I shall hardly leave home again until I go to the meeting of the Trustees at Washington on the 1st Wednesday of February. It would have been particularly pleasant, and perhaps I may say, profitable, for me to meet you before that meeting,—if we had come together casually. But any concerted interview might cause misunderstandings by others, if not by yourself. My own views are unchanged since I wrote you, and are not in the way of being changed. But I must keep myself open to conviction, until I have had a full and free consultation with my associate Trustees. Meantime I hope and trust that nothing of sectional feeling will get into our Board. We have escaped it so far. But yesterday's results prove that the air is saturated with prejudice,—on both sides, I fear. I have purposely avoided all active participation in political strife since Mr. Peabody charged me with presiding over this Southern Trust. I inclose the only expression of opinion which I ventured on during the campaign; and that was forced from me by an unauthorized use of my name. But it was prophetic of the result. Solid Souths and Solids Norths have been plainly arrayed against each other, and the issue has been very much what I anticipated. A good Providence presides over Nations as well as over individuals; and I will not question that all will be for the best in the end. But I yearn for an era of good feeling, and wish that all the old parties could be merged into a grand union of patriots.

Mr. Evarts has just sent for my files the letter of Dr. Cutting, which you sent him. I shall take it, with all the other testimonials, to Washington.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Very truly, yours,

ROBT. C. WINTHROP.

Hon. J. L. M. CURRY. Digitized by Microsoft®

Mr. Winthrop, in his telegram announcing the new appointment, had requested Curry's presence in Washington, where the Board was in session; and accordingly on the day following that of its receipt, he went to the Capitol.

Friday 4.—To Riggs Hotel. At 11 met Peabody Board of Trustees, who received me cordially.

To the Senate and House of Representatives.

Dined with the Peabody Trustees at Secretary Evarts'.

Other details of his appointment are recorded in an additional entry:—

In acknowledgment of the high honor sought by many worthy applicants, I expressed my sincere thanks, and my determination to give my best power to carrying out the past policy, with which I was familiar. Gen. Henry R. Jackson, a Trustee from Georgia, informed me that Gen. Grant made the motion for my election, jocularly remarking that the nomination was fit to be made, notwithstanding the gentleman was not from Ohio.

Curry's acceptance of the position of General Agent of the Peabody Fund necessitated the surrender of his duties as Professor in Richmond College. He accordingly resigned at once; and at the close of the session in June was made a Trustee of the College, and this office he continued to hold for fifteen or twenty years, during a large part of which time he was President of the Board.

To the discharge of his duties as Agent of the Peabody Fund Curry brought the varied experience of a busy and already distinguished career, the enthusiasm which remained a peculiar characteristic of his mind throughout his life, and the ambition to put aside the losses of the past in the

endeavor of achievement for the future. There were very many eminent scholars and educators who either made direct application to succeed Dr. Sears in the position, or whose names were presented by their friends and admirers; but both Mr. Winthrop, the President of the great Trust, and Dr. Sears, its accomplished General Agent, had long before the latter's death fixed upon Curry as Sears' successor. In their disinterested judgment his character and capacity and catholic spirit conspicuously marked him as the man for the place; and in their view the members of the Board concurred with a unanimity that was without hesitation.

His association with both Mr. Winthrop and Dr. Sears had already informed them of his fitness, and had prepared him to take up and develop the work on the lines of its successful foundation and former conduct. His qualifications were all accentuated by the facts of his Southern birth, association, and training; and were calculated to appeal to the confidence and to arouse the favorable expectations of both North and South.

Dr. Sears, with his eye long upon him as the man of all men to take up the dropped thread of his own ended work, had written to him in February, 1880:—

We shall be more and more interested in the legislation of the several States. We come directly in contact with legislative bodies in arranging for normal schools. I would not be surprised if when you come to the front (as I confidently expect you will), you shall find yourself specially in this congenial atmosphere. I am sure a great work is before you. I do not regret being a pioneer. I only hope the pioneer work will be well done. I want no higher honor. I could have had no higher joy.

It would have taken doubtless a less discerning mind than Curry's to interpret the suggestions of such communications as this; and he responded to them with a study of the Trustees' aims and plans. As early as 1873, he had attracted the attention of Dr. Sears, who wrote to Mr. Winthrop in that year that he knew a man "at that moment who was abundantly qualified and admirably adapted" for the duties of the General Agency, "if anything should happen" to him; and in a later letter in the same year he mentions Curry's name as that of the man of whom he had written. In a letter of September 7, 1877, he says:—

Speaking of our successors, I would say, I have recently had Dr. Curry with me, and went over with him all my plans and doings. I am more and more satisfied that he is our man; he is so many-sided, so clear in his views, so judicious, and knows so well how to deal with all classes of men. His whole being is wrapped up in general education, and he is the best lecturer or speaker on the subject in all the South. He is in perfect accord with us on all points. If I can be the means of securing him for future General Agent, I think it will be the best thing I ever did for the Trustees.

And in April, 1879, he writes again to Mr. Winthrop:—

I am trying to put things in good order for my successor. I keep Dr. C. informed of all I do. He understands well that I have no authority, though he knows my opinion of his fitness for the office.

Winthrop shared heartily in Sears' views of Curry; and when the time arrived for the election, it was only natural that he should have been chosen by

the Board with the unanimity which his support by such authority demanded.

At the time of Curry's election, the Peabody benefaction had been in existence for fourteen years. The instrument creating it bears date of February 7, 1867; and by its provisions sixteen men of national reputation, representing in their most intimate local attachments the North, East, South and Middle West, were made Trustees of the Fund, with power to perpetuate their number, for its efficient and beneficent administration. The roster of its Trusteeship as constituted by Mr. Peabody contained the names of many who were illustrious, among all who were distinguished. They were Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts, Hamilton Fish of New York, Bishop Charles P. McIlwaine of Ohio, General Ulysses S. Grant, Admiral D. C. Farragut, William C. Rives of Virginia, John H. Clifford of Massachusetts, William Aiken of South Carolina, William M. Evarts of New York, William A. Graham of North Carolina, Charles Macalester of Pennsylvania, George Wetmore of New York, Edward A. Bradford of Louisiana, George N. Eaton of Maryland, and George Peabody Russell of Massachusetts.

It was the purpose of Mr. Peabody that his gift should be employed to meet "the educational needs of those portions of our beloved and common country which have suffered from the destructive ravages, and the not less disastrous consequences, of civil war"; which was an euphemistic statement of great delicacy whose meaning pointed to the battle-ravaged and impoverished States of the late Southern Confederacy.

On March 14, 1867, Dr. Barnas Sears, the Presi-

dent of Brown University at Providence, Rhode Island, upon the solicitation of Mr. Winthrop, the chairman of the Peabody Board, submitted to the Trustees a letter, in which he outlined his views as to the best methods of carrying out Mr. Peabody's purposes,—a letter which Sears had read to Curry, under the oaks at Staunton, as related in an earlier chapter. Five days after the submission of this letter by Dr. Sears to the Board, the Board approved its suggestions; and with a common impulse determined that the author of the plan which it proposed was the proper man to put it into effective operation. Dr. Sears was thereupon elected the first General Agent of the Fund. He had studied in Germany after graduating from Brown University, and had been successively a Professor in the Newton Theological Seminary, Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, and President of Brown University; and he brought to the work, upon which he entered, and which he continued during his tenure of the office to conduct with great energy and extraordinary tact and diplomacy, a varied wealth of educational and professional experience. His noble and disinterested career as General Agent, in which he labored with unvarying patience and good temper, and with a most admirable willingness to modify and adapt opinions to developed circumstances, is deserving of unqualified praise in the history of education in America. He stimulated, with intelligence and increasing success, State aid to public education; he sought to develop a public sentiment in favor of general education; and he was efficient in aiding to put into the organic and statute laws of a number